

*Based on Psalm 30. Finding Joy After a Long, Dark Night*

*We have God's joy in our blood.*

So says the writer Frederick Buechner in his book *Longing for Home: Recollections and Reflections*.

*God created us in joy and created us for joy, and in the long run not all the darkness there is in the world and in ourselves can separate us finally from that joy.*

In the end, Buechner writes, *joy is our home*.

The Psalmist in our Lesson today comes to the same conclusion in what is basically a thank you note to God for turning his life around. *You have turned my mourning into dancing*, the Psalmist says. *You have clothed me with joy. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.*

The Psalmist's joy is, truth be told, hard fought. On the other side of a long and lingering illness. Or oppression. Or rejection. We never quite get clear on what actually happened. But we can certainly relate, two long years into COVID and all of the collateral fallout from it all.

What we do know is that the Psalmist was riding high one day and sinking into oblivion the next. Puffed up with self-importance one day and languishing in the Pit the next. Strong as a mountain one day and fragile as a spider web the next. Enemies - real or perceived - threaten to tear the Psalmist down. And we can probably relate to that journey as well.

Life feels basically over for the Psalmist. But then there is a turning. A rock bottom, if you will. A crying out for help in which the prayer for help itself becomes a gift of grace. The prayer for help itself becomes the lifeblood of joy flowing through our veins insisting that the worst that is within us and among us and through us is not the final answer.

Joy is the final answer.

Which is where we find ourselves on this May Day Morning, Two Thousand Twenty - Two, with two hard years of global pandemic and worldwide mayhem behind us and, let's face it, God only knows what is yet to come. Life is still hard and fraught with fragility, to be sure.

But spring is here, in its fullness, for real, and summer is on its way. *Winter's come and gone*, as Mary Anne and Than Hitt love to sing, *a little bird told me so*. The earth that is our very body is coming alive and maybe, just maybe we are too. And maybe, just maybe, we can thrive on the other side of all of this crazy, weaving our way in and through and out of this maypole of grace where laughter and love abound.

Even Robin Williams, who in hindsight was so incredibly filled with despair, told us *Spring is nature's way of saying, "let's party!"* And so we must! With our ribbons and our flowers and our dancing and our singing. Because the thing about joy is that it cries out to be shared and is in fact multiplied in the sharing. It turns out joy is infectious, perhaps even more infectious than COVID!

And so, on this May Day Morning, as we celebrate the joy of simply being alive, the Psalmist's Alleluia, by proxy, becomes our own.

Let the church say, Amen!